GREEN FANCY

By GEORGE BARR McCUTCHEON

Author of "GRAUSTARK," "THE HOLLOW OF HER HAND," "THE PRINCE OF GRAUSTARK," ETC.

The Girl of Green Fancy.

Synopsis.—Thomas K. Barnes, a wealthy young New Yorker, on a walking trip in New England near the Canadian border, is given a lift in an automobile by a mysterious and attractive girl, who says she is bound for a house called Green Fancy. At Hart's tavern Barnes finds a stranded troupe of "barn-storming" actors, of which Lyndon Rushcroft is the star and "Miss Thackeray" the leading lady. They are doing hotel work for their board. Barnes finds them entertaining, but as the storm rages he worries over the mysterious and attractive girl of the automobile and wonders if she got safely to Green Fancy.

CHAPTER III—Continued.

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He had been standing there not more than half a minute peering in the direction from whence came the rhythmic bang of the anvil—at no great distance, he was convinced—when some one spoke suddenly at his elbow. He whirled and found himself facing the gaunt landlord.

"Good Lord! You startled me," he exclaimed. His gaze traveled past the tall figure of Putnam Jones and rested on that of a second man, who leaned, with legs crossed and arms folded, against the porch post directly in front of the entrance to the house, his features almost wholly concealed by the broad-brimmed slouch hat that came far down over his eyes. He, too, it seemed to Barnes, had sprung from nowhere.

"Fierce night," said Putnam Jones, removing the corncob pipe from his

Some One Spoke Suddenly at His Elbow.

lips. Then, as an afterthought, "Where'd you walk from today?"

"I slept in a farmhouse last night, about fifteen miles south of this place, I should say."

"That'd be a little ways out of East Cobb," speculated Mr. Jones.

"Five or six miles."

"Goin' over into Canada?"

"No. I shall turn west, I think, and strike for the Lake Champlain country."

"I suppose you've traveled right smart in Europe?"

"Quite a bit, Mr. Jones."

"Any partic'lar part?"

"No," said Barnes, suddenly divining that he was being "pumped." "One end to the other, you might say."

"What about them countries down around Bulgaria and Roumania? I've been considerable interested in what's going to become of them if Germany gets licked. What do they get out of it, either way?"

Barnes spent the next ten minutes expatiating upon the future of the Balkan states. Jones had little to say. He was interested, and drank in all the information that Barnes had to impart. He puffed at his pipe, nodded his head from time to time, and occasionally put a leading question. And quite as abruptly as he introduced the topic he changed it.

"Not many automobiles up here this time o' the year," he said. "I was a little surprised when you said a feller had given you a lift. Where from?"

"The crossroads a mile down. He came from the direction of Frogg's Corner and was on his way to meet someone at Spanish Falls. It appears that there was a misunderstanding. The driver didn't meet the train, so the person he was going after walked all the way to the forks. We happened upon each other there, Mr. Jones, and we studied the signpost together. She was bound for a place called Green Fancy."

"Did you say she?"

"Yes. I was proposing to help her out of her predicament when the belated motor came racing down the slope."

"What for sort of looking lady was she?"

"She wore a veil," said Barnes succinctly.

"Young?"

"I had that impression. By the way, Mr. Jones, what and where is Green Fancy?"

"Well," began the landlord, lowering his voice, "it's about two mile and a half from here, up the mountain. It's a house and people live in it, same as any other house. That's about all there is to say about it."

"Why is it called Green Fancy?"

"Because it's a green house," replied Jones succinctly. "Green as a gourd. A man named Curtis built it a couple o' years ago and he had a fool idee about paintin' it green. Might ha' been a little crazy, for all I know. Anyhow, after he got it finished he settled down to live in it, and from that day to this he's never been off'n the place."

"Isn't it possible that he isn't there at all?"

"He's there, all right. Every now and then he has visitors—just like this woman today—and sometimes they come down here for supper. They don't hesitate to speak of him, so he must be there. Miss Tilly has got the idee that he is a recluse, if you know what that is."

Further conversation was interrupted by the irregular clatter of horses' hoofs on the macadam. Off to the left a dull red glow of light spread across the roadway and a man's voice called out, "Whoa, dang ye!"

The door of the smithy had been thrown open and someone was leading forth freshly shod horses.

A moment later the horses—prancing, high-spirited animals — their bridle bits held by a strapping blacksmith, came into view. Barnes looked in the direction of the steps. The two men had disappeared. Instead of stopping directly in front of the steps the smith led his charges quite a distance beyond and into the darkness.

Putnam Jones abruptly changed his position. He insinuated his long body between Barnes and the doorway, at the same time rather loudly proclaiming that the rain appeared to be over.

"Yes, sir," he repeated, "she seems to have let up altogether. Ought to have a nice day tomorrow, Mr. Barnes—nice, cool day for walkin'."

Voices came up from the darkness. Jones had not been able to cover them with his own. Barnes caught two or three sharp commands, rising above the pawing of horses' hoofs, and then a great clatter as the mounted horsemen rode off in the direction of the crossroads.

Barnes waited until they were muffled by distance and then turned to Jones with the laconic remark:

"They seem to be foreigners, Mr. Jones."

Jones' manner became natural once more. He leaned against one of the posts and, striking a match on his leg, relighted his pipe.

"Kind o' curious about 'em?" he drawled.

"It never entered my mind until this instant to be curious," said Barnes.

"Well, it entered their minds about an hour ago to be curious about you," said the other.

CHAPTER IV.

An Extraordinary Chambermaid, a Midnight Tragedy, and a Man Who Said "Thank You."

Miss Thackeray was "turning down" his bed when he entered his room after bidding his new actor friends good night. He was staggered and somewhat abashed by the appearance of Miss Thackeray. She was by no means dressed as a chambermaid should be, nor was she as dumb. On the contrary, she confronted him in the choicest raiment that her wardrobe contained, and she was bright and cheery and exceedingly incompetent. It was her costume that shocked him. Not only was she attired in a low-necked, rose-colored evening gown, liberally bespangled with tinsel, but she wore a vast, top-heavy picture hat whose crown of black was almost wholly obscured by a gorgeous white feather that once must have adorned the wing of an ostrich. She was not at all his idea of a chambermaid. He started to back out of the door with an apology for having blundered into the wrong room by mistake.

"Come right in," she said cheerily. "I'll soon be through. I suppose I should have done all this an hour ago, but I just had to write a few letters. I am Miss Thackeray. This is Mr. Barnes, I believe."

He bowed, still quite overcome.

"You needn't be scared," she cried, observing his confusion. "This is my regular uniform. I'm starting a new style for chambermaids. Did it paralyze you to find me here?"

"I couldn't believe my eyes."

She abandoned her easy, careless manner. A look of mortification came into her eyes as she straightened up and faced him. Her voice was a trifle husky when she spoke again, after a moment's pause.

"You see, Mr. Barnes, these are the only duds I have with me. It wasn't

"You See, Mr. Barnes, These Are the Only Duds I Have With Me."

necessary to put on this hat, of course, but I did it simply to make the character complete. I might just as well make beds and clean washstands in a picture hat as in a low-necked gown, so here I am."

She was a tall, pleasant-faced girl of twenty-three or four, not unlike her father in many respects.

"I am very sorry," he said lamely. "I have heard something of your misfortunes from your father and—the others. It's—it's really hard luck."

"I call it rather good luck to have got away with the only dress in the lot that cost more than tuppence," she said, smiling again. "Lord knows what would have happened to me if they had dropped down on us at the end of the first act. I was the beggar's daughter, you see—absolutely in rags. Glad to have met you. I think you'll find everything nearly all right. Good night, sir."

She closed the door behind her, leaving him standing in the middle of the room, perplexed but amused.

"By George," he said to himself, still staring at the closed door, "they're wonders, all of them. I wish I could do something to help them out of—" He sat down abruptly on the edge of the bed and pulled his wallet from his pocket. He set about counting the bills, a calculating frown in his eyes. Then he stared at the ceiling, summing up. "I'll do it," he said, after a moment of mental figuring. He told off a half dozen bills and slipped them into his pocket. The wallet sought its usual resting place for the night: Under a pillow.

He was healthy and he was tired. Two minutes after his head touched the pillow he was sound asleep.

He was aroused shortly after midnight by shouts, apparently just outside his window. A man was calling in a loud voice from the road below; an instant later he heard a tremendous pounding on the tavern door.

Springing out of bed, he rushed to the window. There were horses in front of the house—several of them—and men on foot moving like shadows among them.

Turning from the window, he unlocked and opened the door into the hall. Some one was clattering down the narrow staircase. The bolts on the front door shot back with resounding force, and there came the hoarse jumble of excited voices as men crowded through the entrance. Putnam Jones' voice rose above the clamour.

"Keep quiet! Do you want to wake everybody on the place?" he was saying angrily. "What's up? This is a fine time o' night to be— Good Lord! What's the matter with him?"

"Telephone for a doctor, Put—damn' quick! This one's still alive. The other one is dead as a door nail up at Jim Conley's house. Git ole Doc James down from Saint Liz. Bring him in here, boys. Where's your light? Easy now! Eas-ee!"

Barnes waited to hear no more. His blood seemed to be running ice cold as he retreated into the room and began scrambling for his clothes. The thing he feared had come to pass. Disaster had overtaken her in that wild, senseless dash up the mountain road. He was cursing half aloud as he dressed, cursing the fool who drove that machine and who now was perhaps dying down there in the taproom. "The other one is dead as a door nail," kept running through his head—"the other one."

A dozen men were in the taproom, gathered around two tables that had been drawn together. The men about the table, on which was stretched the figure of the wounded man, were undoubtedly natives: Farmers, woodsmen or employees of the tavern. At a word from Putnam Jones they opened up and allowed Barnes to advance to the side of the man.

"See if you c'n understand him, Mr. Barnes," said the landlord. Perspiration was dripping from his long, raw-boned face. "And you, Bacon—you and Dillingford hustle upstairs and get a mattress off'n one of the beds. Stand at the door there, Pike, and don't let any woman in here. Go away, Miss Thackeray! This is no place for you."

Miss Thackeray pushed her way past the man who tried to stop her and joined Barnes.

"It is the place for me," she said sharply. "Haven't you men got sense enough to put something under his head? Where is he hurt? Get that cushion, you. Stick it under here when I lift his head. Oh, you poor thing! We'll be as quick as possible. There!"

The man's eyes were closed, but at the sound of a woman's voice he opened them. The hand with which he clutched at his breast slid off and seemed to be groping for hers. His breathing was terrible. There was blood at the corners of his mouth, and more oozed forth when his lips parted in an effort to speak.

With a courage that surprised even herself, the girl took his hand in hers. It was wet and warm. She did not dare look at it.

"Merci, madame," struggled from the man's lips, and he smiled.

Barnes leaned over and spoke to him in French. The dark, pain-stricken eyes closed, and an almost imperceptible shake of the head signified that he did not understand. Evidently he had acquired only a few of the simple French expressions. Barnes had a slight knowledge of Spanish and Italian, and tried again with no better results. German was his last resort, and he knew he would fail once more, for the man obviously was not Teutonic.

The bloody lips parted, however, and the eyes opened with a piteous, appealing expression in their depths. It was apparent that there was something he wanted to say, something he had to say before he died. He gasped a dozen words or more in a tongue utterly unknown to Barnes, who bent closer to catch the feeble effort. It was he who now shook his head; with a groan the sufferer closed his eyes in despair. He choked and coughed violently an instant later.

"Get some water and a towel," cried Miss Thackeray, tremulously. She was very white, but still clung to the man's hand. "Be quick! Behind the bar."

Barnes unbuttoned the coat and revealed the blood-soaked white shirt.

"Better leave this to me," he said in her ear. "There's nothing you can do. He's done for. Please go away."

"Oh, I sha'n't faint—at least, not yet. Poor fellow! I've seen him upstairs and wondered who he was. Is he really going to die?"

"Looks bad," said Barnes, gently opening the shirt front. Several of the craning men turned away suddenly.

"Who is he, Mr. Jones?"

"He is registered as Andrew Paul from New York. That's all I know. The other man put his name down as Albert Roon. He seemed to be the boss and this man a sort of servant, far as I could make out. They never talked much and seldom came downstairs. They had their meals in their room."

"There is nothing we can do," said Barnes, "except try to stanch the flow of blood. He is bleeding inwardly, I'm afraid. It's a clean wound, Mr. Jones. Like a rifle shot, I should say."

"That's just what it is," said one of the men, a tall woodsman. "The feller who did it was a dead shot, you c'n bet on that. He got t' other man square through the heart."

"Lordy, but this will raise a rumpus," groaned the landlord. "We'll have detectives an'—"

"I guess they got what was comin' to 'em," said another of the men.

"What's that? Why, they was ridin' peaceful as could be to Spanish Falls. What do you mean by sayin' that, Jim Conley? But wait a minute! How does it happen that they were up near your dad's house? That certainly ain't on the road to Span—"

"Spanish Falls nothin'! They wasn't goin' to Spanish Falls any more'n I am at this minute. They tied their horses up the road just above our house," said young Conley, lowering his voice out of consideration for the feelings of the helpless man. "It was about 'leven o'clock, I reckon. I was comin' home from singin' school up at Number Ten, an' I passed the hosses hitched to the fence. Naturally I stopped, curious like. There wasn't no one around, fer as I could see, so I thought I'd take a look to see whose hosses they were. I thought it was derned funny, them hosses bein' there at that time o' night an' no one around. Looked mighty queer to me. Course, thinks I, they might belong to somebody visitin' in there at Green Fancy, so I thought I'd—"

"Green Fancy," said Barnes, starting.

"Was it up that far?" demanded Jones.

Mystery follows upon tragedy. Who are the men and why were they shot? Barnes finds himself forced into the complication.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

A Springtime Thaw

By ANNA REDPERN

Big Bill Sheldon was decidedly not a Westerner. One could have guessed that fact by his air of reserve—a refined, courteous, but nevertheless clearly obvious I-am-sufficient-for-myself manner. The manner, however, was not of Bill's own choosing; rather was it a product of environment. Moreover, it was a source of deep grievance to him, for try as hard as he might he could not make friends, with a reserve as impenetrable as the Rock of Gibraltar rising between himself and every one he met. Even the glad spontaneity of a merry Western city, where friendliness was the rule, rather than the reverse, seemed not to melt the ice. How could his new-found acquaintances divine for themselves that within his six feet bulk of calm, blond nonchalance lay a desire for adventure as keen as that of some twelve-year-old devotee of Nick Carter; or that the wistful look showing forth every now and then from his deep gray eyes betokened only the strong desire that somewhere, sooner or later, some one would notice him and really like him in spite of himself. No wonder he moped; and no wonder Aunt Della stood at her wit's end to entertain him. She had fed him to the fattening point; she had introduced him in turn to every one she knew; she had waited on him more tenderly than his own mother would have done, and still he looked bored.

"I think, auntie," he said after the first week of agony, "that I shall have to be starting for home. Father can scarcely run the shop without me—much as I would like to stay," he added as a polite afterthought.

There was no doubt that Bill was homesick. And whether 6 feet 200 pounds suffers proportionately more than does 5 feet 100 pounds, even Bill had no heart to answer. Blue to the bottom of his No. 8 boots, he paced gloomily around Aunt Della's sunny, comfortable living room, impatiently bumping against knick-knacks and chairs. Fourteen times without stopping he paced. On the fifteenth round he stopped by the long French window with a jerk. He pulled aside the blue cretonne curtains, and drawing himself erect in the soft spring sunshine he drank in the pleasing sight through eyes and nose and mouth.

The morning was clear and fair and radiant; the clouds were blue and soft and fleecy; the lawns were lush and green with young grass; the trees were newly in leaf. But a fairer sight than all this caught and held his attention. In a neighboring yard, scarcely two rods away, there flashed a maiden back and forth with movements as graceful and dainty as those of some wood nymph.

With a few deft movements she drew up the sagging white-string net and fastened it taut across the tennis court. She tried out her balls and rackets with a bubbling, boylike exultancy, as if the tonic of springtime had found affinity with her feet. "Yough," gasped Bill, and "Yough!" "Oh, auntie, who's the young lady next door?"

Aunt Della carefully set her pie crust in the yellow mixing bowl, wiped her hands and came at her young nephew's excited call.

"That's no young lady," she corrected. "That is Irene Roberts. Why, I've known that child ever since she was born."

"How long is that, auntie?" Bob persisted.

"Well, now, let me see. It must be twenty years or thereabouts." Bob raised his eyebrows quizzically, but Aunt Della rattled on. "Yes, and just as you see her now she's always been—jumping, running, playing tennis, riding horseback. She's a regular tomboy."

To Aunt Della Irene was just the same madcap little girl that she had always known from childhood up. Not so to Bill! He stood by the window and watched his lively young neighbor's gyrations with distinct approval. "She is flame and action," he mused as her red-brown bobbed curls flashed in the sunshine. Altogether he approved of her—of her trim white flannel dress and high-cut russet boots, of her well-knit, graceful figure swaying in the sheer delight of motion, and her frank boyish activity. So much did he approve that the wistful look came back into his deep brown eyes, and the homesick feeling formed a hard lump and settled in his throat.

That she had no companion in her game seemed not to bother Irene at all. Back and forth she scintillated, her tennis ball now on one side of the net, now on the other.

Suddenly she threw down her ball and started toward Bill's point of observance. "Auntie Bascom," she called, "I'm coming in to see you."

Bill's experience of twenty-two years, did not include instruction in chain-lightning action. Of course, he wanted to meet the girl. For what else had he been planning during the last fifteen minutes but for this? However, this was sudden action. As Irene called he hastily drew back from the window and began measuring with his eyes the distance from his window to the kitchen where Aunt Della kept busily at work. In the open he could have covered it with three leaps, but here there was furniture to intervene. Too, Irene had seen him at her first glance. There seemed no graceful way of escape. So Bill threw back the long French window and stood bravely waiting for events to happen.

"Irene, this is my nephew, Bill Sheldon, from the East," called Auntie Bascom from the the other room.

Bill gravely acknowledged the introduction with a bow, striving meantime to down the rising reserve which was always intensified by a meeting with a stranger.

"I'm pleased to meet you." Irene's full-throated voice rang out pleasantly as she extended her firm white hand and raised her blue, blue eyes to his. She waited for no reserve to melt. In fact, she neither felt nor noticed any such thing.

"Do you play tennis?" she inquired, with a glance toward the racket in her hand.

Then Bill surprised himself. "Just try me," he answered, "when you finish your errand."

Auntie Bascom heaved a sigh of relief as they walked off together. "Irene'll keep him amused for a little while," she ejaculated, "although I know he won't approve of her romping ways."

Somehow there was not any more talk of going home, and somehow Bill began to take an interest in his visit. Never did Aunt Della attribute this change to the lively Irene, for there was always a crowd of young people together. Her enlightenment came suddenly and unintentionally.

Bill had gone away for the evening. The dishes had been carefully washed and dried. The soft evening breeze blew by the open door with a pulling force. Throwing a shawl about her shoulders, Aunt Della started across the garden path to her neighbor's, Mrs. Roberts, for a chat. It was a walk that she loved. The moonlight was soft and scented. Her thoughts turned fondly back to the time when she had not walked this path alone. Passing slowly along, she stopped for a moment by the summer house. Her attention was caught by a familiar voice:

"But, Irene, are you sure that you can put up with an old stupid like me?"

Then a tremulously happy voice replied:

"Oh, Bill, are you sure you will never call me a tomboy?"

Aunt Della wanted to pass quietly along, but her astonishment held her rooted to the spot. Bill sensing the presence of an outsider discovered her. He drew the gentle Irene out into the soft glamor of the moonlit night.

"You may kiss Irene, auntie," he generously offered in bold confidence. "You may have known her ever since she was a baby, but I shall even that up, for I expect to know and love her for the rest of her lifetime."

Murderer's Oversight.

Perhaps the smallest creature that ever unrolled the curtain from before an unsuspected murder was that which convicted the murderer of Mr. and Mrs. Newtown in 1820. A station-master sold a ticket at a small station and received a silver coin dated 1820, rather oddly marked. He put the coin in his pocket and placed another in the till, and that afternoon showed it to some of his friends. A man recognized it immediately as one that Newtown had kept for some time as a pocketpiece and lucky coin, and this was the first hint gained by the detectives as to where they should look for the murderer, who was subsequently apprehended and convicted. It was a minute trifle, this handing over a coin, but it brought the murderer to the just punishment which his crime deserved. Had he chanced on any other piece of money in his pocket—and it was afterwards known that he had a pocketful of money—he would in all probability have remained undiscovered.—London Mail.

If Your Eyes Are Tired.

Seat yourself on one side of the room, facing the wall opposite. Hold the head still and raise the eyes slowly until you are looking as nearly as possible at the ceiling above you. Now lower the eyes, looking at the floor before you. Take care, when looking down, not to focus the eyes on the nose, but on the floor at your feet. Repeat this ten times, but take care not to over-weary the eyes.

Now look as far to the right as possible, then slowly shift the gaze to the left. Repeat as before.

For a final exercise, imagine a huge circle in the air before you, and without moving the head, follow the outlines of this circle with your eyes, beginning at the left, and going to the right for ten times, then beginning at the right and moving toward the left.

When your exercises are over, bathe the eyes in warm water to which you have added a pinch of boracic acid, then close them and rest for five minutes.

Telling Fortunes With Oil.

Among the Kherrias of India a very curious marriage ceremony is reported. Taking a portion of the hair of the bride and bridegroom in turn from the center of the forehead, the priest draws it down onto the bridge of the nose. Then pouring oil on the head, he watches it carefully as it trickles down the portion of hair. If the oil runs straight onto the tip of their nose their future will be fortunate, but if it spreads over the forehead or trickles off on either side of the nose, ill luck is sure to follow. Their fortunes told, generally to their own satisfaction, the final part of the ceremony takes place. Standing up side by side, but with faces strictly averted, the bride and bridegroom mark each other's forehead with "sindur" (vermilion).